

HEADLINES



September 12, 2005

Rock Island Proud of Year's Accomplishments

Rock Island City Council meets annually in September to determine goals for the year. Rock Island made major progress with the priority targets identified last year.

[Mayor Mark Schwiebert](#) stated, "We've seen a lot of accomplishments over the last year in many areas, from new housing starts to street improvements, to promoting and marketing our city. [City Council](#) goal-setting sessions set the stage for continued progress in the years to come. "

He added, "Likewise, in a competitive world with the increasing demands made on cities, the strategic planning we do in our goal setting helps us look at those challenges in a thoughtful and effective way."

Some of the highlights from last year include the following:

QCIC - A redevelopment plan for [QCIC](#) was approved by the City Council. Demolition should begin this fall on some of the buildings. McLaughlin Body started construction at the facility to install their new painting operation that will lead to 60 additional jobs.

Beautification and Gateways - Plans were implemented or are underway to improve four "gateways" into Rock Island.

- The City purchased land on 11th Street near Blackhawk Road to be improved for an attractive city gateway and Schrieber/Anderson is currently creating a design.
- The Centennial Bridge landscaping was completed
- At the corner of 24th Street and Fourth Avenue, Renaissance Rock Island will landscape this city entranceway in the fall.
- The [Parks & Recreation Department](#) developed a landscape plan for the 44th Street open area near QCIC.
- As part of the franchise negotiations with MidAmerican Energy, they agreed to collaborate to enhance the entrance to the city at the Arsenal Viaduct and help screen the electrical substation; Schrieber/Anderson is currently designing this entranceway.

RiverVision - The [RiverVision Plan](#) was approved. A coordinating committee was established as part of an intergovernmental agreement that was approved by the Cities of Rock Island and Davenport to monitor the implementation of the RiverVision Plan. Schrieber/Anderson Associates was hired to prepare the Armory Park design and a Hendricks Development Group was selected as the developer for the Armory property.

Infill Housing - Three new infill housing projects were approved and two are under construction, which will result in 121 new housing units.

- The City entered into a development agreement with HMV Developers on Chippiannock Trails that will result in 35 lots for high-end residential and construction is underway.

- The City approved a development agreement for College Hill at the St. Mary's Convent property, a new housing project that will consist of 74 units of townhomes and condominiums, and construction is underway.
- Rezoning of the Villa de Chantel property was approved. The developer proposes to proceed with renovation of the property for elderly assisted living.
- Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation and Rock Island Housing Authority constructed six single-family homes in older neighborhoods.
- The City Council approved a development agreement for twelve condominiums at 24th Street and Blackhawk Road.
- All single-family lots in Highland Place have been sold with 14 homes completed or under construction. Four villa units have been completed.
- Fox Trail plat was approved and four homes are under construction.

Infrastructure Upgrade Plans - Infrastructure upgrade plans were submitted to the City Council for the water system, and options were reviewed for the Wastewater Long-Term Control Plan.

Casino - After several challenges, the Casino Rock Island project is back on track and site reclamation work is nearing completion. House Bill 1919 passed to give authority to the Illinois Gaming Board to approve a move. The Governor signed this legislation on August 23, 2005 in Rock Island.

Public Arts - Investment in public arts was approved with new art projects and an artist loan program.

- TIF funds were approved for the placement of downtown art and three art projects were approved.
- Funds were also allocated for the creation of an arts loan program in the downtown.
- TIF assistance was provided to the Development Association of Rock Island to establish "Brew and View II" at the Rocket Cinema.

City Bond Rating - The City's bond rating obtained an upgrade to an A-1.

Innovative Public Works Programs - A new solid waste collection system, a voluntary [water service repair program](#), and a [rain gardens](#) program were approved.

Rental Inspections - A new [rental housing licensing program](#) was approved.

- Licensing of rental property owners is underway; 2,100 buildings have been registered, representing 4,000 units.
- New staff was hired to implement the program.
- A checklist was created that identifies the scope of the planned property inspections and an informational session was held to explain the new program.
- A new [rental incentive program](#) was approved to aid property owners to address code violations.

Downtown Housing - Downtown housing continued with the successful renovation of Sala Flats and the Voss Brothers Lofts apartments.

- Sala Flats renovation is complete and all 33 apartments have been rented.
- Construction is underway at Voss Brothers Lofts to create 35 apartments.
- Through the [Downtown Upper Story TIF Program](#), four units at Shields Sewing, four units at LeFigaro, and three units at Circa '21 were completed.

- City Council agreed to support GROWTH and RIHA effort to complete the Murphy Lofts project and one unit has sold.

Community Marketing - The new marketing campaign was implemented that started with creating a 2-year marketing plan. An advertising campaign promoting Rock Solid, Rock Island was launched and the new web site www.LiveRI.com was created. The community survey was conducted.

Police Chief - A national search resulted in the selection of John Wright as the City's next police chief.